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United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report provides an overview of the activities undertaken by the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific during the period from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014. During the reporting period, the Regional Centre continued to promote dialogue and confidence-building in the region and beyond by organizing the twelfth United Nations-Republic of Korea Joint Conference on Disarmament and Non-proliferation Issues in Jeju, Republic of Korea, which served as an important forum to address key challenges in those fields at both the global and regional levels. The Centre undertook projects to build national capacity to combat illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, in Myanmar, and to enhance national implementation of international treaties on biological and chemical weapons, in Mongolia and Nepal. It also organized regional seminars to promote the Arms Trade Treaty (General Assembly resolution 67/234 B), following its opening for signature in June 2013, as well as regional seminars on information and cybersecurity. Additionally, in its efforts to strengthen its outreach and advocacy activities, the Centre carried out peace and disarmament education activities. The Centre expanded its communications and outreach efforts, with a view to strengthening its engagement with the full range of stakeholders in the region.

With support from Member States and other partners, the Regional Centre plans to expand, in the coming year, its programmes aimed at providing assistance, upon request, to Member States and other stakeholders in the region in strengthening their capacity to tackle challenges in the fields of disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation.

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The Regional Centre depends solely on voluntary financial contributions to implement its programmatic activities. The Secretary-General wishes to express his gratitude to Member States, including the host country, Nepal, and other partners that supported the Centre's operations and programmes with financial and in-kind support. He calls upon countries in the region and beyond to make voluntary contributions to the Centre to ensure the sustainability of its activities and operations and to enable it to fulfil the mandate entrusted to it by the General Assembly.

I. Introduction

1. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 42/39 D, the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific is mandated to provide, upon request, substantive support for initiatives and other activities mutually agreed upon by the Member States in Asia and the Pacific for the implementation of measures for peace and disarmament through the appropriate utilization of available resources. The Regional Centre facilitates and coordinates the implementation of regional activities of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs in Asia and the Pacific.

2. In its resolution 68/59, the General Assembly expressed its satisfaction with the activities carried out in the past year by the Regional Centre. The Assembly reaffirmed its strong support for the role of the Centre in the promotion of activities of the United Nations at the regional level to strengthen peace, stability and security among the Member States in Asia and the Pacific and requested the Secretary-General to report to the Assembly at its sixty-ninth session on the implementation of the resolution.

3. The present report is submitted pursuant to the above-mentioned request and covers the activities of the Regional Centre during the period from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014. A financial statement on the status of the Trust Fund for the Regional Centre for the second year of the biennium 2012-2013 is contained in the annex.

II. Activities of the Regional Centre

4. During the reporting period, the Regional Centre focused its programmatic activities on the following areas: promoting the implementation of global disarmament and non-proliferation instruments, including through assisting national capacity-building; enhancing dialogue and confidence-building in the areas of disarmament, non-proliferation and regional security; and executing outreach and advocacy initiatives.

A. Promoting the implementation of global disarmament and non-proliferation instruments

5. Following the opening for signature of the Arms Trade Treaty, in June 2013, the Regional Centre held a meeting in Manila, on 26 and 27 November 2013, to facilitate regional dialogue on the Treaty and to discuss the steps towards its signature and ratification. Representatives from 19 Member States in Asia and the Pacific attended the meeting, which was hosted by the Government of the Philippines and supported financially by the Governments of New Zealand and Switzerland.

6. At the regional meeting, participants discussed priority areas and common challenges, and identified tools for assisting States in the region in their efforts to move towards signing and ratifying the Treaty. International and regional experts provided information and insight on legal issues, possible assistance mechanisms and technical matters in areas of importance for the participating States in their efforts to ratify the Treaty.

7. The Regional Centre supported the organization of two workshops on the national implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction, on 20 and 21 February and 9 and 10 June 2014, in Kathmandu. Supported financially by the European Union, the workshops brought together approximately 20 officials from 12 relevant government agencies of Nepal and facilitated active discussions between them and international experts on key issues and ways forward regarding the implementation of the Convention in Nepal. The experts briefed participants on the nature, requirements, ratification process and aims of the Convention. Agreement was reached on an action plan for 2014 for the national implementation of the Convention, tailored to the needs of Nepal.

8. In collaboration with the Government of Mongolia and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, the Biological Weapons Convention Implementation Support Unit and the Regional Centre organized a workshop on the national implementation of the Biological Weapons Convention and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction, on 28 and 29 April 2014, in Ulaanbaatar. Supported financially by the European Union, the workshop brought together participants from 18 government ministries and agencies as well as civil society organizations of Mongolia to discuss, with international experts, key issues and ways forward regarding the implementation of the two conventions in Mongolia. The experts briefed participants particularly on the nature, requirements, ratification process and aims of the conventions. The preparation of an action plan for the implementation of the Biological Weapons Convention in Mongolia was also discussed.

9. In cooperation with the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and of Defence of Myanmar, the Regional Centre organized a two-day workshop to assist in strengthening the capacities of personnel from various government agencies in small arms and light weapons control and in the effective implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. Held on 15 and 16 May 2014, in Nay Pyi Taw, the workshop brought together more than 40 government officials from 18 national departments and agencies to discuss the policies, practices and technical issues related to implementing the Programme of Action. The topics explored ranged from relevant international and regional instruments to the management of stockpiles of weapons and ammunition, and best practices were shared between the participating national officials and international experts. To further ensure long-term sustainability, a package of key background documents on small arms and light weapons was prepared in the national language for future use as a resource for government officials. The event was hosted by the Government of Myanmar and supported financially by the Government of Switzerland.

B. Promoting dialogue and confidence in the areas of disarmament, non-proliferation and security

10. Continuing what has become known as the "Jeju Process", the Regional Centre and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea held the twelfth Joint Conference on Disarmament and Non-proliferation Issues in Jeju, Republic of

Korea, on 14 and 15 November 2013. About 50 representatives from Governments, intergovernmental organizations, research institutes and academia participated.

11. The Conference, on the theme "Non-Proliferation Regime in the Twenty-First Century: Challenges and the Way Forward", focused on a range of non-proliferation issues, with a special emphasis on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). Participants addressed new security proliferation challenges in the twenty-first century from non-State actors and examined the work of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004). They also presented ideas on how the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004) and existing export control regimes could be linked, and emphasized the importance of strong government relations with industry and academia in preventing nuclear terrorism. The Conference served as an important forum for members of the international disarmament community to engage in informal and candid discussions on key challenges in the areas of disarmament and non-proliferation. The Conference contributed to in-depth understanding of complex issues among participants and to confidence-building among stakeholders, and explored various options for seeking solutions to non-proliferation challenges.

12. Following the meeting of the Group of Governmental Experts on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security in June 2013, the Regional Centre organized a meeting to facilitate dialogue on cybersecurity issues. Altogether, 74 delegates from 25 Member States, academia, the private sector, civil society and United Nations organizations attended the meeting, held in Beijing, on 5 and 6 June 2014. The meeting was hosted and supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China, and organized together with the China Arms Control and Disarmament Association. Senior officials involved in national policy coordination on cybersecurity issues discussed emerging challenges, the role of the United Nations in promoting dialogue on cybersecurity, and national, regional and international responses (including internal coordination, capacity-building, confidence-building measures and the formulation of international norms of behaviour).

C. Partnership, outreach and advocacy

13. In June and July 2013, the Centre organized its second children's art competition, under the theme "Peace for Everyone", in Nepal. More than 900 students from 12 schools in the Kathmandu Valley participated in the competition. Thematic briefings conducted in advance at the schools helped the participating children to reflect on, discuss and visualize what peace meant to them, their families and communities, which they then expressed through their drawings. The project culminated in an awards ceremony, held on 20 September 2013, correlating with the International Day of Peace. Through their drawings, the schoolchildren contemplated their personal relationship to peace and conflict, which is an important issue in the transformation of a post-conflict society.

14. In August 2013, the Regional Centre launched a project to assist the Ministry of Education of Nepal in integrating peace and disarmament education into the national curriculum and textbooks. The Centre provided training and technical support for government officials at four workshops focused on, respectively, facilitating gap analysis of existing curricula; the development of a model

curriculum for peace and disarmament education; the inclusion of peace and disarmament education into national curricula for grades nine and ten; and the insertion of new peace and disarmament lessons into national grade eight textbooks. These educational initiatives will reach an estimated 400,000 teenagers nationwide per year and help strengthen a culture of peace among the next generation.

15. The Regional Centre participated substantively in the student presentations on international issues, held in Saitama City, Japan, in August 2013, contributing to the students' understanding of global peace and security issues. Students from six high schools delivered presentations and shared their expectations of the United Nations and Governments. A panel of representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, the Centre for the Promotion of Disarmament and Non-Proliferation and the Regional Centre provided comments. The event was organized by Saitama City and its Board of Education, in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, the Japan Model United Nations and the Regional Centre. It served as an excellent example of promoting peace and disarmament education, and demonstrated the potential for enhancing cooperation between local government and the United Nations.

16. In the period under review, the Regional Centre enhanced its partnerships with regional and other intergovernmental organizations, including the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the European Union, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation and the Pacific Islands Forum, and with United Nations entities. The Centre also expanded its communications and outreach activities to include academic institutions and regional non-governmental organizations.

17. The Regional Centre continued to strengthen its outreach and advocacy efforts to ensure the regular provision of accurate and timely information about its work and about disarmament issues in general. The Centre increasingly broadened its engagement with regional and international stakeholders, in particular by launching its new website and producing a short video on its peace and disarmament education project in Nepal, which was screened on 18 September at the United Nations in New York and Geneva, in connection with observance of the International Day of Peace.

D. Future activities

18. While continuing its regular activities, the Regional Centre plans to expand its efforts to provide assistance to States in the region, upon their request, especially in the areas of training, technical assistance and other forms of capacity-building, in particular regarding the implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty and Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). These efforts will include the following:

(a) In order to promote early ratification of the Arms Trade Treaty by States in Asia and the Pacific, and its future implementation, the Centre will continue to facilitate regional dialogue regarding the Treaty and assist States in the region, upon request, in their efforts to move towards ratifying the Treaty, including through capacity-building, technical assistance and outreach activities;

(b) The Centre plans to support international efforts to prevent non-State actors from acquiring weapons of mass destruction, in particular for terrorist purposes, as embodied in resolution 1540 (2004). As part of the Office for Disarmament Affairs, the Centre will work closely with the 1540 Committee and

experts, Member States and other stakeholders to facilitate the full implementation of this important initiative;

(c) The Centre will continue its peace and disarmament education activities in Nepal, with a view to offering the programme to other States in the region in the future.

III. Staffing and financing

19. Three posts are funded from the regular budget: the Director of the Regional Centre and one Professional (P-3) and one General Service (G-7) staff. The host country, Nepal, through its voluntary contribution, provided two local support staff. In addition, Japan provided the Centre with one Junior Professional Officer; Finland provided one United Nations Volunteer; and Switzerland provided two United Nations Youth Volunteers. The Centre relies on voluntary contributions for all of its substantive programmes and for part of its operating costs. The Secretary-General encourages other Member States to consider providing similar in-kind support for the Centre.

20. In 2013, voluntary contributions in the amount of $280,754 were received from Member States. The Secretary-General wishes to express his gratitude to the Member States that have made financial and in-kind contributions to the Regional Centre, including China, Finland, Japan, Kazakhstan, Nepal, New Zealand, Pakistan, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, Switzerland and Thailand, as well as the non-governmental organization Rissho Kosei-kai, of Japan. Such financial and in-kind contributions remain essential to ensuring the sustainability of the operations, core activities and programmes of the Centre. The Secretary-General urges all Member States, in particular those from the region, as well as other donors to provide financial resources in support of the Centre's programmes, which benefit Asia and the Pacific.

IV. Conclusion

21. During the reporting period, the Regional Centre actively engaged in and supported peace and disarmament initiatives in Asia and the Pacific. Working with Member States and other stakeholders, it continued to fulfil its mandate to provide assistance, upon request, to Member States and to conduct outreach and advocacy activities. The Centre will expand the breadth and scope of its activities, as feasible, including identifying new and innovative modalities through which to provide support to Member States in the region. The annual conference held in the Republic of Korea continues to serve as an important forum for promoting dialogue and confidence-building in the areas of disarmament, non-proliferation and security, and the Centre anticipates an interesting and constructive twenty-fifth United Nations Conference on Disarmament Issues, to be held in Hiroshima, Japan, in August 2014. The Centre stands ready to expand the assistance it provides to Member States in addressing the challenges they face in the fields of disarmament and non-proliferation. Its overarching goal is for the States in the region to see the Centre as a key reference and source of support for questions of peace, security and disarmament.

Annex

Status of the Trust Fund for the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific for 2013

(United States dollars)

Reserves and fund balance, 1 January 2013	706 667
Income	
Voluntary contributions	290 754[a]
Interest income	4 993
Other/miscellaneous income	39 201[b]
Transfers from other funds	40 000[c]
Total, income and transfers from other funds	**374 948**
Expenditure	262 537
Programme support costs	26 851
Refunds to donors	7 259[d]
Total, expenditure and refunds	**296 647**
Reserves and fund balance, 31 December 2013	**784 968[e]**

[a] During the reporting period, contributions totalling $290,754 were received from: China ($50,000), Kazakhstan ($19,975), Nepal ($96,264), New Zealand ($75,295), Pakistan ($4,972) and the Republic of Korea ($44,248).

[b] Represents refund of prior period expenditure.

[c] Represents transfers from the Trust Fund for Global and Regional Disarmament Activities, as authorized by the Government of Japan.

[d] Represents refund to the Government of Germany.

[e] Consists of reserves and fund balance as at 1 January 2013, plus income received and transfers from other funds in 2013, less expenditure incurred and refunds made during the year.